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Voice

What one thing can your employer do to help you this year?

One of the things Oprah Winfrey knows for sure is that people just want to be heard. As those that oversee teams move from managers to coaches, active listening skills will be even more important. Here are some suggestions on how you can incorporate active listening within your team and/or company.

To strengthen the employee-manager relationship, have frequent and consistent one-on-one meetings with your direct reports. Here is a commonly suggested 4-question format for these conversations:

1. What went well last week?
 2. What obstacles did you face last week?
 3. What are your priorities this week?
 4. How can I help?
- In virtual or in-person meetings, make sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the conversation/discussion.
 - Provide advance notice of the meeting content so your attendees have time to think/prepare.
 - Use employee resource groups to better understand different perspectives. Actively engage them in conversations.
 - Acknowledge employee survey results regardless of their outcomes and include employees in the process of celebrating what is working and solving issues identified.
 - To gain new perspectives on old processes and projects, encourage new employees to offer their input. Their outsider input may offer new perspectives/insights.
 - When you address a feedback topic, tie it back to where the topic was first discussed and how any ongoing discussions impacted the insights/outcomes.

All of these suggestions – and these are only a few – offer companies the opportunity to build trust, deepen relationships, and strengthen engagement with their employees.

